

EXAMINING THE DIFFERENCES IN
COMMENTARY OF FEMALE ATHLETES
IN NCAA DIVISION I BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT COVERAGE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this current study is to examine differences between male and female play-by-play and color announcers during women's NCAA tournament games. This study was inspired by previous research conducted by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) on the portrayal of female athletes in basketball. Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) conducted a case study following the commentary of men's and women's National Collegiate Athlete Association Division championship games in 1986. From their results, they concluded that the commentary "trivialized the women's efforts or implied that they were unsuited to sport" (p. 18) (Participation in women's athletics has been an issue dating back before Title IX was enacted June 23, 1972).

Background

Title IX states, "No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid" ("About Title IX," 2005). Title IX gave women equal opportunity to participate in sports. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009), in their most recent "Women's History Month" press release, there have been drastic participation increases for girls in high school sports. In the 1979-80 school year, only 1.75 million girls were on athletic teams. That number increased to 3 million in

the 2006-07 school year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). They also reported that 174,534 women participated in a National Collegiate Athletic Association sport in the 2006-07 school year. Lisa Leslie, Brandi Chastain, Cynthia Cooper, and Mia Hamm are just a few of the female athletes who have become prominent in recent years. Their success in their chosen sports has translated into high public visibility and earned them millions of dollars. Such prominence would have been unheard of for female athletes like Babe Didrickson in previous generations. It is important to note advances that female athletes' have made since Title IX to realize that amount and quality of coverage should also be making advances. As female athletes have become more prominent, the content of the coverage of these female athletes has come into question.

The Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, Women and Girls in Sports, and the Canadian Association of Women and Sport are just a few of the women's sports organizations dedicated to increasing participation of women and girls in sports, as well as generating greater media coverage. Why do these organizations insist on making sure women and girls can fairly participate in all facets of athletics? The WSF encourages that girls should participate in sports because it benefits them psychologically, physically, and socially. The Foundation also reported that girls who participate in sports are less likely to become pregnant, are 60% less at risk for breast cancer, build a high level of self-esteem and confidence, and have a better body image (WSF, 2008). The WSF published a set of guidelines titled "Words to Watch" about how coverage and commentary should be equal between men and women (WSF, 2008). After receiving questions about how women should be portrayed visually,

the WSF then published “Images to Watch,” guidelines encouraging that both athlete and non-athlete models be portrayed non-sexually (WSF, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Although the outcomes of women competing in sports seem more than beneficial, why does research support the notion that women’s sports are deemed unworthy of serious coverage? The Women’s Sports Foundation (2008) suggested that women be reflected as skilled athletes, as males are, when promoting their sport or promoting other’s products in endorsements or advertising. Previous research found that coverage of women’s sports is biased, stereotypical, and not fully supported by the media (Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999; Eastman & Billings, 2001); this may explain some girls’ hesitance in participating in sports.

Justifications for Study

There are three major justifications for advancing research on this subject. First, this study will attempt to show if sports commentary of female basketball players has progressed or regressed. Just in the last two decades, women have been more visible in commentating on both men’s and women’s athletics, which was very unlikely to occur around the time of the original Duncan and Hasbrook study. In 1995, female announcers like Robin Roberts, Ann Meyers, and Beth Mowins began broadcasting women’s and men’s events and are helping to educate the public about women’s sports, as they have explained their appreciation for helping bring more attention to women’s sports (Blount, 1995). Additionally, you can find women like Cheryl Miller and Michele Tafoya working sideline at men’s NBA games. Thus, examining the differences between gender and

commentary is important in analyzing how their announcing effect audiences' perceptions of women's sports.

The second justification for this study is providing information on the effects of the media on cultivating our expected roles in society as men and women. Stets and Burke (2000) suggested media tend to shape our perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable social and role identities. The effects of sports commentary, in terms of whether not it trivializes women's sports or praises their level of skill, could be an influencing factor in audience perceptions and participant behavior.

The third justification for this study is advancing understanding about the framing effects of the media. Media have the ability to influence and impact the perceptions of audience members. This paper will discuss framing theory and its effects through the definition and implications as identified by Huffman, Tuggle, and Rosengard (2004).

The next chapter of this study will be a literature review, which will discuss the application of the framing theory to the commentary of women's sports as well as incorporate several sources on the concept of the inequalities and differences between male and female athlete's sports coverage and commentary. The second section of the literature review will provide hypotheses based on the findings in the literature review. The third chapter of this study will discuss the methodology of content analysis, and how it will be used to observe communication behaviors of commentators during Women's NCAA tournament games. Next the sample size, population, coding procedures, will be discussed. Finally, this chapter will discuss the application of the Chi-Square Test of Independence, why, and how it will be used in this study. The fourth chapter will be an analysis of the data, including tables to illustrate whether or not each hypothesis was

supported. Finally, chapter five will compare the results of this study with the results of previous studies discussed in the literature and provide a conclusion about the findings. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of the study and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will discuss (a) theoretical application (b) coverage of women's athletics, (c) sex and sports, (d) viewership, ratings, and statistics, and (e) sports commentary. A number of sources will be used to incorporate concepts about sports coverage of women's athletics. A summary of the literature review, research questions, and hypotheses will be formulated based on these findings.

Theoretical Application

Framing

Framing causes separation between one's attitudes and behaviors, therefore leaving one to change their opinions on some values and opinions (Sniderman et al, 1991). The overall idea is that media frame values already present in our everyday lives and cultures, therefore media reinforce those values and beliefs, limiting audience member's exposure to other ideas. If the media do not expose audience members to a fair representation of women's athletics, this may affect some audience's perception of women in sports.

Framing theory, or frame analysis, has frequently been applied in politics, the sciences, and communications studies. Definitions of framing have been offered by

several authors (including: Goffman, 1974; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991; Rowe, 1999; Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). The publics' understanding of situations or information is shaped by the frames provided by the media (Jamieson & Waldon, 2003). In politics, Jamieson and Waldon (2003) argued that the frames of the press highlight some realities and omit others (also considered gatekeeping, in that the press decides what will be in the news and what will not). Frames are influenced by "external and internal factors" (Jamieson & Waldon, 2003, p. xii), thus having an effect that causes inconsistency with persons' already held beliefs and opinions (Sniderman et al., 1991). For the purpose of this study, the definition and implications given by Huffman et al. (2004) highlight how media coverage frames women's athletics. Huffman et al. (2004) wrote about the framing of women's sports in the media, "One meaning is conveyed by what gets covered, but another equally powerful meaning is conveyed by what does not receive media attention" (p. 477). These powerful meanings are the "underlying depictions" that audience members see, hear and read in the media (Jamieson & Waldon, 2003).

One group easily influenced by media is children. The consistency of media frames of women's sports will shape a stereotypical perception that will form what children consider as reality (Billings & Eastman, 2002). Young women may be hesitant to participate in sports if there is not a positive reflection of women's sports in the media. If changing the frame of women's sports is not on the agenda of the media, then commentary and coverage of women's sports may never change. The media's daily frames of women's athletics will provide a real assessment of the advancement of coverage of women's portrayals and depictions in sports (Tuggle & Owen, 1999).

The media, possibly the most powerful institution of modern society, is the source of reinforcing male hegemony and creating the meanings associated with images and themes in society (Kim, Walkosz, & Iverson, 2006). Society's perception of women's athletics comes in part from the media, who shape, create, and disseminate the values considered suitable and accurate for females (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosenbgard, 2004). Kim et al. (2006) argued that the way the world perceived women's sports is provided through the frame which the media depicts. Huffman et al. (2004) added the media's choice to seldom cover women's sports could be merely based on individuals' own partiality, and their personal preferences continue to sustain the frame that trivialize women's sports. Therefore, assuming that individual's like or dislike for women's sports could be the underlying reason for the current frame on women's sports. Moreover, if women's sports do not have an audience, then they will not have any advertisers, and ultimately they won't receive any coverage. Thus, those in charge of the media, have the power to change the frame of women's athletics and to disseminate new values and norms to be accepted by audience members.

Additional Relevant Theories

The media have the power to reinforce social behavior and gender role portrayal. Gerbner (2009) clarified that the cultivation process is intermingled influences between the medium and its public, as he explained:

“Institutional needs and objectives influence the creation and distribution of mass-produced messages which create, fit into, exploit, and sustain the needs, values, and ideologies of mass publics. These publics, in turn, acquire distinct identities as publics partly through exposure to the ongoing flow of messages” (p. 180).

Gerbner (2009) explained, “Broadcasting is the most concentrated, homogenized, and globalized medium” p. 176). Geberner (2009) further explained that television is the

source of the most shared images and messages in history, and that heterogeneous publics are socialized everyday through this source of entertainment. Gerbner (2009) blamed television for “the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse publics” (p. 178). Therefore, a population of diverse people and ideas can be shaped and cultivated into having the same beliefs and attitudes that are disseminated by those who control the media.

Bandura (1975) explained that patterned behavior is learned either in a verbal or pictorial form, and television presents models who serve as “influential sources of social behavior” (p.4). Through the modeling process, people can be conditioned to either accept certain patterns of behavior through reward and punishment (Bandura, 1975). The significance of the modeling process as it is related to framing is through the images portrayed by the media, people are influenced into believing and accepting what is shown as acceptable forms of behavior. If women’s sports continue to be trivialized, audience members may be conditioned to also belittle women’s sports. Bandura (1975) argues that modeling is a crucial part of learning. The media have become a large part of influencing the values and norms learned by society.

Coverage of Women’s Athletics

Trivialized Coverage

Several researchers have found coverage of women’s sports is trivialized, suggesting women are not athletic competitors, unsuited to sport, and that women’s sports are not as real as men’s sports (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Kane, 1989; Tuggle & Owen, 1997). In a study conducted by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) on men’s and women’s NCAA basketball championship games, they failed to find any mention of the

female athlete's knowledge or mental ability during the games. Eastman and Billings (2000) found that on ESPN and CNN, the tone of commentary for male athletes was "enthusiastic" but was "derogatory" towards female athletes. They also found women's personal lives were mentioned more than men's. Focusing on women's off-the-court contributions and problems may take away from on-the-court accomplishments.

Researchers have suggested that coverage of women's sports is inferior as far as athleticism and ability, presenting a case of sexism between men and women in sports. Tuggle (1997) argued that society's perception of female athletics is molded by how sportscasters report on women's athletics. Hallmark and Armstrong (1999) argued that subtle biases in women's sports coverage can be considered dangerous and the media should treat women's sports as equal in order to stray from depicting them as inferior. Schell (2000) explained that a false postulation of women's athletics is that they are non-competitive and female athletes are not taken seriously. Sportscasters have the ability to mold audiences' ideas about women's athletics through their subtle biases, possibly causing audiences to think negatively of women's athletics.

Bernstein (2002) argued that the media's role is to present to society what is considered important, and by diminishing coverage of women's sports, they paint the picture that women's sports do not exist. Although women's sports have made vast advancements since the 1970s, lack of coverage of women's athletics has hindered this advancement. Kane (1989) found that women's sports receive minimal coverage, and numbers suggest that women are absent from sports. There has been a diminutive growth of coverage of women's sports over the years.

Amount of Coverage of Women's Athletics

Viewership, Ratings and Statistics

In a study of audience experience with televised sports, Ganz and Wenner (1991) found more men interested in televised sports than women (50.9% to 23.7%). Men watch sports in order to “get psyched up, relax, and unwind” and they also showed interest in the “drama” and “tension” of the game, while most women only watched because others were watching and it gave them something to do with friends and family (Ganz & Wenner, 1991, p. 4). The authors concluded the media highlights masculinity while airing sports, possibly causing women to enjoy watching sports less (Gantz & Wenner, 1991.)

Angelini (2008) explained men are less likely to watch female athletes because it challenges the gender roles of society, and they support watching male athletes to reinforce male hegemony in sports. Furthermore, exposure to masculine stereotypes can cast false impressions of women's sports to the viewing audience and perpetuate these stereotypical images (Angelini, 2008).

The 2006 Women's NCAA Tournament reached 1.3 million homes and was the most viewed tournament on ESPN (Johnson, 2006). That year, ESPN had a 19% rating increase from 2005 of people watching the NCAA Championship game, and ESPN showed all 63 games of the women's tournament, and they saw another increase, up 15% in ratings from 2005 (Johnson, 2006). In 2008, the average ratings on ESPN went from 1.0 to 1.4 from 2007 to 2008 of women's NCAA games. The average in TV ratings for ESPN2 also increased from 0.5 to 0.6 (“TV Ratings,” 2008).

Amount of Coverage

Tuggle (1997) analyzed coverage of women's sports on ESPN *Sportscenter* and CNN *Sports Tonight* and found that on both shows there is the suggestion that women's sports are undeserving of regular coverage. In two newspapers, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, the lack of coverage of women's sports belittled women's efforts by making them absent (3 to 1 in favor of men) (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Male executives in charge of sports on television and their lack of interest in women's athletics have been credited as the major reasons for the lack of attention women's sports receive (Blount, 1995).

Billings and Eastman (2002) found in a study of the 2000 Olympic Games that women were depicted as being less athletic and lacking commitment as compared to males. Male athletes received a greater amount of coverage than female athletes (53% to 47%), with men also receiving the most prime time coverage. From these findings, Billings and Eastman (2002) concluded that the Olympics can never be considered as reality until there is fair coverage and commentary of women's athletics and athletes.

Messner, Duncan, and Cooky (2003) conducted an analysis of the quantity and quality of news broadcasts of women's sports that expanded and extended previous research they conducted in 1990 and 1994. From their findings, it was suggested that television coverage merely follows the growth of women's sport, instead of leading or promoting their advancement (Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003). The most prevailing finding from this study was that over the decade of the 90s, there was a lack of change in the coverage of women's sports. Women comprise 38% to 42% of all sports participants,

but only 6% to 8% of sports coverage is of women's athletics (WSF, 2008). Ann Meyer's recognized the importance of women's coverage as she stated, "...women's basketball needs more regular coverage throughout the season to build interest... You see the top men's teams week in and week out, but you see the best women's teams only once" (Blount, 1995).

Sex and Sports

Sexual Objectification

Researchers have previously found that women's sports are sexually objectified in sports media content. Women's sports are sexually objectified through print and television commentary through condensing descriptors, gratuitous visual ads or photographs, and sexist television commentary conventions (Daddario, 1999). An example of this is when former professional soccer player Brandi Chastain took off her shirt, revealing her sports bra after scoring the winning goal for the Women's World Cup Championship (Messner et al., 2003). The media focused on Chastain taking off her jersey more than the fact that she scored the winning goal. In a content analysis of photos in *Sports Illustrated*, most women, when shown, were with men and shown mainly as wives or girlfriends. It was found that women were almost absent from photos (Bishop, 2003).

Messner, Duncan, and Cooky (2003) found in their study of women's coverage on nightly news networks that most of the coverage was "humorous," had "nonserious women's sports," and that most of that coverage contained sexual content (p. 40-41). For example, on March 17, 1999, one of the networks featured a story on "nude bungee jumping" (p. 41). Messner, Duncan, and Willms (2006) explained most content of

women on nightly sports news were “gag features” or were stories of “pseudosports” and commentators were “amused” by these stories that also included sexual references. An example of an athlete perpetuating sexual stereotypical images would be auto racing driver Danica Patrick, who advertises for the “Go Daddy” commercials. Shows that portray these images of women support the image of “white, heterosexual, feminine attractiveness,” like Anna Kournikova in 1999 and Maria Sharapova in 2004 (Messner et al., 2006). Coverage and comments about Kournikova tended to focus on her beauty instead of her level of skill.

Kim et al. (2006) explained how the media reinforce the image of white, feminine, and sexy:

Ironically, although this constructed coverage is intended to develop the commercial appeal of women’s sport, by not providing balanced coverage to all women commercial benefits may be diminished by the exclusion of large numbers of women. In the face of such media representations, many athletes find themselves without fair representation and the audience is not exposed to the richly diverse world of women’s sports. (p. 319)

When considering Kim et al.’s point, if coverage of female athletes is not fair and accurate, not only could it damage the image of women’s athletics among audience members, but it also could hinder possible endorsement benefits by stereotyping and sexualizing women in sports.

Femininity, Masculinity: Team and Individual Sport

Hovden & Psifer (2006) examined a number of newspaper articles that all had similar implications about the forms of power and symbols present in sport. Researchers argued in their findings that these articles found relevance and parallels between societal gender order and sports. Sport challenges “dominant societal gender order” and often helps to reproduce these “dominant images and practices of gender” (Hovden & Pfister,

2006, p. 9). Women's participation in sports is a challenge to society's stereotyping of what is feminine, as gender role conformity insists that masculinity and femininity are opposites (Kane, 1989).

Daddario (1999) examined the portrayal of female athletes during the 1992 Winter Games, and found that although women were shown in physical events, media marginalized their efforts through condensing descriptors and not crediting those efforts to competition. Although commentary used for male athletes was also used to describe these female athletes, the commentary had sexist and trivialized descriptors. The mass media are prominent in presenting masculine sports hegemony consistently and reinforcing male and female sex differences (Daddario, 1999).

The way media portray men's sports as masculine and women's sports as feminine could come from the way society stereotypes and individuals identify with social or role identities. (Stets & Burke, 2000). This would suggest that in its coverage, the media are simply imitating values and beliefs of gender roles from what is practiced and observed in society. But when the media focus on gender roles instead of athletic skills and accomplishments, it causes a damaging effect on women's sports (Kane, 1989). There is a phenomenon of inadequate media coverage for women's participation in "male appropriate" sports, team and some individual (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988, p. 1). Angelini (2008) explained team sports have also been those sports considered "masculine" (basketball & softball), and individual sports are those deemed "feminine" (golf and tennis).

In a study of the 1996 Olympic Games broadcast on NBC, Tuggle and Owen (1999) found that almost twice as much coverage was devoted to women's individual

competition over women's team events; there were 68 individual events and 29 team events. Tuggle and Owen (1999) also discovered that men's team sports received more coverage than women's team sports, and insisted, "More media exposure dedicated to women's team sports is needed to change the perception that certain women's sports are simply less deserving of attention than are their male counterparts" (p. 179). Lack of coverage and trivialization of women competing in team sports is a denial of team (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Furthermore, the mass media deny women's team sport and labels their participation in these sports to not be feminine and subconsciously deny any power to women (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). In a sport like basketball, the concept of team is an imperative and central theme of that game. If the media deny the presence of team in women's sports, their covert implication is that women are not actual sporting the game of basketball (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988).

Another issue is the acceptance of individual sports over masculine sports. Kane (1989) found that women participating in masculine, socially unacceptable sports (i.e. softball, rugby, basketball) did not receive as much coverage as women participating in feminine sports (i.e. gymnastics, tennis, golf), causing viewers to never see women outside of the frame that the media have formed for women's sports. Tuggle and Owen (1997) found individual sports that do not include physical contact received the most coverage, insisting that women who participate in team sports are not the same. A content analysis of *Sports Illustrated* found that over a span of 20 years, there were only 3 feature stories including achievements of women who play male sports; two were basketball and one was soccer (Bishop, 2003).

ESPN's *100 Greatest Athletes of the 20th Century* show (based on surveys from 48 sports experts) had a total of only 8 women place in the top 100 (8%), 89 men and even 3 horses made the countdown (Billings, 2000). Surprisingly, of those 8 women, there was not one woman from a sport considered feminine (gymnastics, figure skating) possibly presenting a "feminine sports" bias (Billings, 2000). This finding contradicts other studies that found masculine sports deemed as unacceptable.

Another study contradicted most other studies in its findings of women's sports. Kian, Mondello, and Vincent (2009) found in a content analysis of coverage of CBS *SportsLine* and espn.com, that males were not portrayed as being "naturally superior" to their female counterparts, even though they did receive a considerably larger amount of coverage than women. Women's basketball also received more positive descriptors in two categories (positive skill level/accomplishments and psychological/emotional strengths) than their male counterparts (Kian et al., 2009). Considering that this study is from 2009, the results of this research could have implications for the future of sports media content of women's athletics. The positive reinforcement of female athlete's skill and psychological abilities is the type of coverage that could aid in changing the frame of women's sports.

After analyzing sports coverage on televised sports news and highlight shows from 1989 to 2004, Messner et al. (2006) argued:

Sport is one of the last bastions of men's traditional power and privilege. The women who have stormed the playing fields by the millions have contested this patriarchal institution. But televised sports continue to juxtapose images of powerful male bodies with sexualized images of women's bodies in ways that affirm conventional notions of male superiority and female frailty (p. 38).

They concluded:

Sport is not a separate “world.” It is intertwined with other aspects of social life in important ways. For the gender imagery of sports media to reflect and support this revolution in female athleticism, power relations and perceptions of gender must continue to change within sport organizations, among commercial sponsors who promote and advertise sports, within schools and universities, and within the mass media. (p. 38).

Hence, not only can media help in creating positive portrayals of women’s athletics, but all institutions, organizations, and enterprises invested in sports can be held accountable in reversing the currently held negative false images.

Sports Commentary

Role of Commentary in Sports

Sport play-by-play and color commentators play an important role in influencing attitudes, experiences, and impact of the game experience for viewers listening or watching from home. Dramatic commentary is important to the perception and appreciation of a broadcast game, and dramatizations from television commentators’ substitute for the viewer at home who is not actually at the game, and adds emphasis for the viewer to know what is happening due to the visual limitations of television (Bryant, Comisky, & Zillman, 1977). The commentator is not only reporting, but “he¹ has the additional duty of complementing the drama on the field and, presumably, of generating involvement and excitement for the television spectator” (Bryant et al., 1997, p. 144). Commentators have disseminated the perceptions of female athletes when covering women’s sports, helping to form society’s views of women in general (Tuggle, 1997).

Women and Commentary

Female commentators have made their way to the front of commentating sporting events in the past decades. An example is Ann Meyers, who has been a television

commentator for over 25 years and has made appearances on the WNBA, and men's and women's NCAA basketball telecasts (WSF, 2008). According to Tuggle and Owen (1999), there are more males in announcing positions than females, and most female announcers only hold secondary positions. This has implications that female announcers are usually not the main play-by-play announcer, but they play the role of color commentator following the male play-by-play announcer.

Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found in their study of marathon running that female commentators countered stereotypical comments made about female athletes with positive comments. This could suggest women having a rebellious attitude towards male hegemony and stereotyping in sports.

Summary

Messner et al., (2006) suggested that support of advancement of female commentators will help shift sports towards equitable portrayals of female athletes. Previous literature suggested that the media are responsible for the frame that trivializes women's sports. The research implied that media belittle women's efforts by limiting their coverage, in broadcast and print media, and sexually objectified them in the majority of that content. The importance of the current study is to understand the framing effects of the media that could influence and impact audience members' perceptions of female athletes. Research questions and hypothesis have been formulated based on the findings in the literature review.

Hypotheses

Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found during commentary of marathon running that the female commentator countered stereotypical remarks made by the male commentator with positive comments. This was found during the commentary of what it considered an individual sport. Could commentary of what is considered an individual sport be the same commentary that is expected for a team sport? Additionally, considering that men make up 96.5% of all sports commentators (Messner et al. 2003), can change be anticipated in the depictions of women's athletics and athletes when less than 5% of commentators are women? Do female commentators have an extra duty to protecting the image of female athletes during commentary of the sporting events? This study seeks to investigate how the commentary of the Women's NCAA tournament games will vary depending on the commentator gender.

The literature suggested women's sports are trivialized, sexually objectified, and not taken seriously during their seldom coverage. Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found in their study of NCAA men's and women's basketball championships in 1986 that the commentary suggested the women's efforts were trivialized. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Female play-by-play and color announcers will use a higher proportion of positive attributes describing female athletes than will male play-by-play and color announcers.

Commentators are more likely to make references to the athletes' physical appearances, beauty, grace, and attractiveness. Research supports that women's athletics are sexualized

in television commentary (Daddario, 1999). Thus, the second hypothesis addresses this type of commentary.

H2: Female play-by-play and color announcers will physically objectify female athletes at a lower proportion than will male play-by-play and color announcers.

Basketball is a sport that involves physical skill and competition (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Daddario (1999) explained the media marginalized women's efforts and did not credit their efforts to competition. Research also supports that women's efforts are trivialized in sports commentary (Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988). Previous research would suggest that the commentary will be likely to be absent of such descriptors as: *aggressive, strong, hard work, effort, and power*. Thus, a third hypothesis is presented.

H3: Female play-by-play and color announcers will use a higher proportion of athletic comments about female athletes than male play-by-play and color announcers.

Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) explained that the focusing on individuals rather than the team is a denial of team, and found that most references included information about player's backgrounds and families, rarely about team. Thus, a fourth hypothesis deals with these types of references.

H4: Female play-by-play and color announcers will emphasize the importance of team at a higher proportion in their commentary than will male play-by-play and color announcers.

Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found that commentary of women's play-by-play commentary presented a denial of game. The commentary only consisted of who had possession of the ball, or who shot or fouled. The women's game was absent of jargon such as "no weakside help", "full court diamond press", or "blocked out", and there was no mention knowledge or mental abilities (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Thus, the last hypothesis addresses this type of commentary.

H5: Female play-by-play and color announcers will make references to mental abilities at a higher proportion in their commentary than will male play-by-play and color announcers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research methodology chosen, how it will be applied, and why it was chosen for the study. The remainder of the chapter will detail the sample involved in the study, coding procedures, and a preview of the analysis of the data will be presented. This section is will be presented in this order: (a) methodology of content analysis, (b) sample, (c) commentator category, (d) coding procedures and (e) data analysis summary.

A content analysis was used to examine commentary for NCAA women's tournament games during 2010. Content analysis is "a systematic technique for analyzing message content and message handling – it is a tool for observing and analyzing the overt communication behavior of selected communicators" (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967, p. 2). Content analysis can allow the observance of the communication process, while not being a part of the process, and the observer can analyze the messages to make predictions about the source and receiver, without being biased to the communicators (Budd et al., 1967). The most frequent use of content analysis is to describe the attributes of messages, as will be done in this current study (Holsti, 1969). Content analysis was chosen as methodology for this study in order to examine the attributes (descriptors) used

by male and female play-by-play and color commentators for the purpose of making inferences about the portrayal of female athletes from male and female commentators.

Sample

The researcher recorded audio commentary from 2010 NCAA Women's Tournament games, from March 21, 2010 to April 7, 2010. The audio portion of the games was taped from ESPN 3.com. A random sample was extracted from the games recorded for analysis. Games were separated into three categories based on the gender of the commentary team (male/male, female/female, and male/female) and commentator type (play-by-play, color). The three categories were: male play-by-play and male color; female play-by-play and female color; male play-by-play and female color. Three games from the female play-by-play and female color and male play-by-play and female color categories were randomly selected to provide external validity. Due to the time frame and initial lack of resources during the first two weeks of the tournament, only three male play-by-play and male color games were recorded. Thus, this category was not subject to randomization. The games were analyzed from the tip-off until the end of the first half and from the start of the second half to the end of the game, as previously done by Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002). Each half of a game was 20 minutes and overtime time was five minutes. Only play-by-play and color commentary statements that describe a player were subject to analysis. Additional analyst's commentary and interviews were not coded for this study.

Commentary Category

Similar to Billings et al. (2002), commentary was categorized for analysis: (a) game time (before half time; after half time), (b) commentary type (play-by-play or

color), (c) broadcast announcer gender (male or female), (d) commentator team and (e) descriptive phrase used by commentator (sentence or sentences used to describe the player). The first three criteria (game time, commentary type, and broadcast announcer gender) have been previously used by Billings et al. (2002), and the last two criteria (commentator gender match up and descriptive phrase used by commentator) have been added by the researcher for the purpose of this study, as they were not present in Billings et al. (2002).

Each game was be coded by commentator gender match-up, gender of the announcer, commentator type, and for all statements that describe a player. The categories, offered by Eastman and Billings (2001), were (a) hard work/effort, (b) speed (c) physical power (d) looks/appearance, (e) mental power, (f) determination/motivation, (g) leadership, (h) team orientation, (i) personality, (j) background, (k) versatility, and (l) other. Additionally, two categories were offered by the researcher for the purpose of this study, which included (m) strategy and (n) knowledge. First the statements were coded for the variables (a) physical/athleticism, (b) intelligence/mental skill (psychological), and (c) neutral. Next, the statements will be coded for the variables (a) positive consonance and (b) negative consonance and (c) neutral consonance. These categories were also given by Eastman and Billings (2001), with the exception of both (c) categories for neutral. (Appendix A provides examples of these descriptors).

Coding Procedures

The researcher created a codebook with descriptors and examples of what could be coded for each category of analysis. The researcher trained an additional coder with the codebook; the additional coder coded one game (11%) that was chosen for analysis.

The coders worked independently while coding the same game and Coefficient of reliability was calculated for intercoder reliability (Holsti, 1969). The item-by-item comparison of the coded game showed 90.1% intercoder reliability. This means that the coders agreed more than 90% on the meaning of terms and when these terms were used in the announcers' commentary. Moreover, .90 intercoder agreement is almost always acceptable (Lombard et al., 2010). It should be noted that the majority of omitted comments or additional comments were in categories irrelevant to the current study. After controlling for the irrelevant categories, intercoder reliability increased to 96.7%. Commentary was analyzed by comparing the gender of the commentator and the proportion of descriptors used in each hypothesis. Data were hand coded and inserted into an Excel spreadsheet, and from there transferred into SPSS statistical analysis software. From this comparison, the researcher hoped to be able to make an inference about the differences between male and female commentators when commenting on women's athletics.

Data Analysis

Data have been analyzed using a Chi-Square Test of Independence. Chi-squares are used to test significant differences among two nominal variables. In this study, each hypothesis was tested to determine whether two proportions are similar. The descriptors in each hypothesis were re-coded in SPSS for whether that descriptor was mentioned or not mentioned, generating a 2x2 design for each hypothesis. According to Agresti and Finlay (1986), "For the special case of a 2x2 table, the chi-square test of independence is equivalent to testing the equality of two proportions... (p. 207)." Thus, a significant finding indicates the proportions are different. Further, Gravetter and Wallnau (2000) explained

that finding different proportions also indicates that a relationship exists between the two variables. For this study, in order for each hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square test statistic must be significant and the difference in the proportions needs to be in the specified direction predicted in the hypothesis.

The population being tested is the Women's NCAA Basketball tournament games, and the two variables being compared in this study are the gender of the commentators and the type of commentary (specified descriptors). The hypotheses suggest that the proportions will be different and that there will be some sort of relationship that exists between gender and the specified descriptor.

The coded data were entered into Excel spread sheets and transferred into the statistical data analysis software SPSS to be analyzed. Before the analysis, data were screened for accuracy and the assumptions of the chi-square test for independence. The data were screened for missing data and, univariate outliers, and frequency tables were used to assess the percentages of values in each category. All missing cases represented less than 5% of the data, thus Listwise deletion was used (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p. 36) and there were no univariate outliers. All of the variables were well below the 90% standard (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p. 38), thus no variable represented 90% or more of the data. Finally, since each hypothesis presented a 2x2 design; the assumption is the expected frequency is at least 5 for each cell (Agresti & Finlay, 1986, p. 209). A chi-square analysis was generated for each hypothesis to assess the assumption. All cells had an expected frequency of at least 5, thus the assumption was satisfied. Once all assumption of the Chi-Square Test of Independence had been met for all hypotheses, the researcher conducted the tests.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

An overall total of 1,066 comments were coded about individual players from nine audio recorded Women's NCAA tournament games. Of those nine games, two games went into overtime. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted for each hypothesis because this study involves nominal data. The study sought to examine how the commentary of the Women's NCAA tournament games would vary depending on the commentator gender, thus five hypotheses are predicted.

Trivialization: Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted that female play-by-play and color announcers will use a higher proportion of positive attributes describing female athletes than will male play-by-play and color announcers. For example, if an announcer said "She is a great player" that was coded as a positive comment. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted because both variables were measured at the nominal level. Alpha was set at .05. Chi-Square was statistically significant (X^2 [d.f. = 1] = 14.10, $p = .0005$), meaning the proportions are different and a relationship exists among the two variables.

To determine which cells contributed significantly to the finding, a post-hoc analysis was conducted (Kennedy, 1983, pp. 61-66). Standardized residuals were generated for each cell. Alpha was set at .05, meaning a standardized residual of ± 1.96 or higher would be statistically significant. Table 1 shows the cells for male by positive ($z = 2.2$) and female by positive ($z = -2.2$) were statistically significant because their z-scores exceeded ± 1.96 . The positive standardized residual ($z = 2.2$) indicates more males did not make positive comments about female athletes than would be expected if gender did not matter (Schwab, 2004). Conversely, the negative standardized residual ($z = -2.2$) indicates fewer females did not make positive comments about female athletes than would be expected if gender did not matter.

A test of association was conducted to determine the strength of association and effect size. Phi was selected because the hypothesis involved a 2x2 design. The value of Phi determines the strength of association, and it was significant ($\phi = .115$, $p = .0005$). According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero's guidelines (2002, p. 253), the association between the variables was very weak. Phi was squared to get the percentage of variation ($\phi^2 = .013$), thus gender explained 1.3% of the variation of positive comments made about female athletes.

In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square must be statistically significant and the proportion must be in the specified direction stated in the hypothesis. The significance indicates the difference in proportions is greater than would be expected by chance variation. The chi-square was significant (.0005) and the proportions were in the specified direction predicted in the hypothesis. Table 1 shows Females (73.2%) had

more than 10% more positive comments about female athletes than Females (62.5%).

Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

TABLE 1

Chi-Square Test of Independence Involving Gender and Positive Comments

Charge	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	n	%	z	n	%	z
Not Mentioned	193	37.5	2.2*	148	26.8	-2.2
Positive	321	62.5	-1.5	404	73.2	1.5
Total	514			552		

X^2 (1 d.f., N = 1066) = 14.10, $p = .0005$; ? = .115; * $p < .05$

Physical Objectification: Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that female play-by-play and color announcers will physically objectify female athletes at a lower proportion than will male play-by-play and color announcers. For example, if an announcer said “She’s gotten bigger since last season” it would be considered a physical comment. Because both variables were measured at the nominal level, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted. Alpha was set at .05. Chi-Square was not statistically significant ($X^2[d.f. = 1]$) meaning the variables are not related and the proportions are not different.

Table 2 shows that the overall proportion of comments made about female athletes’ appearance was more for females (11.4%) than males (9.5%). In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square must be significant and the difference in proportions must be in the specified direction predicted in the hypothesis. Because the chi-square ($p = .317$) was not significant and the difference in proportions was not in the specified direction, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

TABLE 2

Chi-Square Test of Independence Involving Gender and Appearance Comments

Physical	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Not Mentioned	465	90.5	489	88.6
Appearance	49	9.5	63	11.4
Total	514		552	

X^2 (1 d.f., N = 1066) = 1, p = .317

Athletic: Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted female play-by-play and color announcers would use a higher proportion of athletic comments about female athletes than male play-by-play and color announcers. For example, if an announcer said “She’s working hard on defense” or “She’s really tough on the court tonight” it was coded as an athletic comment. Before running the test, the previously coded descriptors (a) hard work/effort and (c) physical power (see Appendix A) were collapsed into one variable renamed *athletic*. The two descriptors were similar in their meanings, depending on the context of the comment, and the coders agreed that they could be considered equivalent for the purpose of this study. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted because both variables were measured at the nominal level. The Chi Square statistic between gender and athletic comments was significant at the 5% level (X^2 [d.f. = 1] = 17.60, $p = .0005$), indicating that a relationship exists between the variables and that the proportions are different.

To determine which cells contributed significantly to the finding, a post-hoc analysis was conducted (Kennedy, 1983, pp. 61-66). Standardized residuals were generated for each cell and Alpha was set at .05. As Table 3 shows, the cells for male by athletic ($z=2.4$) indicated more males made athletic comments than would be expected if gender did not matter (Schwab, 2004). Conversely, the negative standardized residual ($z=-2.3$) indicates fewer females made athletic comments than would be expected if gender did not matter.

Finally, a test of association was conducted to determine the strength of association and effect size. Phi was significant ($\phi = -.128$, $p = .0005$) and according to Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero’s guidelines (2002, p. 253), the association

between the variables was very weak. Phi was squared to get the percentage of variation ($\phi^2=.016$), thus, gender explained 1.6% of the variation of athletic comments made about female athletes.

In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square test statistic must be statistically significant and the proportion must be in the specified direction stated in the hypothesis. The significance indicates the difference in proportions is greater than would be expected by chance variation. Although the significant chi-square test statistic (.0005) indicated a relationship exists between the variables and that the proportions are different, the proportions were not different in the specified direction predicted in the hypothesis. Table 3 shows Males (41.6%) had more than 10% higher athletic comments about female athletes than Females (29.3%). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

TABLE 3

Chi-Square Test of Independence Involving Gender and Athletic Comments

Physical	Male			Female		
	n	%	z	n	%	z
Not Mentioned	300	58.4	1.8	390	70.7	1.7
M asc/Athletic	214	41.6	2.4*	162	29.3	-2.3*
Total	514			552		

X^2 (1 d.f., N = 1066) = 17.60, p = .0005, $\phi = -1.28$; * p < .05

Team: Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 predicted female play-by-play and color announcers will emphasize importance of team at a higher proportion in their commentary than will male play-by-play and color announcers. For example, if an announcer said “She’s picking up the slack of the team tonight” it would be considered a team comment. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted because both variables were measured at the nominal level. Alpha was set at .05. Chi-Square was statistically significant (X^2 [d.f. = 1] = 4.7, $p = .03$), so the variables are related and the proportions are different.

To determine which cells contributed significantly to the finding, a post-hoc analysis was conducted (Kennedy, 1983, pp. 61-66). Standardized residuals were generated for each cell and Alpha was set at .05. Table 4 shows none of the cells had a standardized residual of ± 1.96 or higher.

Next, to determine the strength of association and the effect size, a test of association was conducted. Phi was significant ($\phi = -.066$, $p = .030$), and additionally, the association between the variables was very weak. Phi was squared to get the percentage of variation ($\phi^2 = .004$), thus gender explained .4% of the variation of team comments made about female athletes.

In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square must be statistically significant and the proportion must be in the specified direction stated in the hypothesis. The significance means the difference in proportions is greater than would be expected by chance variation. Although the significant chi-square (.03) indicated a relationship exists between the variables and that the proportions are in fact different, the proportions were not different in the specified direction predicted in the hypothesis. Table 4 shows

males (3.5%) had a higher proportion of team comments about female athletes than females (1.4%). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

TABLE 4

Chi-Square Test of Independence Involving Gender and Team Comments

Psychology	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	n	%	z	n	%	z
Not Mentioned	496	96.5	-.2	544	98.6	.2
Team	<u>18</u>	3.5	1.5	<u>8</u>	1.4	1.5
Total	514			552		

X^2 (1 d.f., N = 1066) = 17.60, $p = .0005$, $\phi = -.066$; * $p < .05$

Mental: Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 predicted that female play-by-play and color announcers will make reference to mental ability of the game at a higher proportion in their commentary than will male play-by-play and color announcers. For example, if an announcer said “She can really think without the ball” or “She did a great job reading the defense” it was coded as a mental comment. Before running the test, the previously coded descriptors (e) mental power, (m) strategy, and (n) knowledge (See Appendix A) were collapsed into one variable renamed mental. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted because both variables were measured at the nominal level. Alpha was set at .05. Chi-Square was statistically significant ($X^2[d.f. = 1] = 13.15, p = .0005$), thus the proportions are different and the variables are related.

To determine which cells contributed significantly to the finding, a post-hoc analysis was conducted (Kennedy, 1983, pp. 61-66). Standardized residuals were generated for each cell and Alpha was set at .05. As Table 5 shows, the cells for male by mental ($z = -2.4$) and female by mental ($z = 2.4$) were statistically significant because their z -scores exceeded ± 1.96 . The negative standardized residual ($z = -2.4$) indicates fewer males made mental comments about female athletes than would be expected if gender didn't matter (Schwab, 2004). Conversely, the positive standardized residual ($z = 2.4$) indicates more females made mental comments about female athletes than expected if gender did not matter.

A test of association was conducted to determine the strength of association and the effect size. Phi was significant ($\phi = .111, p = .0005$) and the association between the variables was very weak. Phi was squared to get the percentage of variation ($\phi^2 = .012$),

thus gender explained 1.2% of the variation of mental comments made about female athletes.

In order for the hypothesis to be supported, the chi-square must be statistically significant and the proportion must be in the specified direction stated in the hypothesis. The significance means the difference in proportions is greater than would be expected by chance variation. The chi-square was significant (.0005) and females (16.1%) had a higher proportion of mental comments about female athletes than males (8.8%), as shown in Table 5. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

TABLE 5**Chi-Square Test of Independence Involving Gender and Mental Comments**

Psychology	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	n	%	z	n	%	z
Not Mentioned	469	91.2	.9	463	83.9	.9
Mental	<u>45</u>	8.8	-2.4	<u>89</u>	16.1	2.4
Total	514			552		

X^2 (1 d.f., N = 1066) = 13.15, $p = .0005$, $\phi = .111$; * $p < .05$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine the differences between female and male play-by-play and color commentators during women's NCAA tournament games. The study was guided by five hypotheses and one research question. The importance of the current study is to understand the framing effects of the media that could influence and impact audience members' perceptions of female athletes. Furthermore, women have been more visible in commentating on both men's and women's athletics, which was very unlikely to occur around the time of the original Duncan and Hasbrook study. The hypotheses suggested that a relationship would exist between gender and several descriptors about female athletes. This section will compare the results of this study with the results of previous studies discussed in the literature review in Chapter II. Next a conclusion to the findings will be presented, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research will be offered.

First, there were two unexpected and interesting findings from the results, Male announcers had a higher proportion of team and athletic comments than female announcers. These findings contradicted previous research and did not support hypotheses 3 and 4, as they were the opposite of what was predicted. The third hypothesis predicted female play-by-play and color announcers would use a higher proportion of athletic comments about female athletes than male play-by-play and color announcers. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in proportions between announcers' gender and athletic comments made about female athletes. The results did not support this hypothesis. Although the results found a significant difference between the proportions, the proportions were not different in the direction predicted in the hypothesis. Interestingly, Table 3 shows males (41.6%) made more than 10% more athletic comments about female athletes than females (29.3%). Previous research explained that the media marginalized women's efforts and did not credit their efforts in competitions (Daddario, 1999). It should be highlighted that during coding, most comments fell into two descriptors: (a) hard work/effort and (c) physical power. The results could indicate that more credit is being given to female athletes' hard work, effort, and physical power. Additionally, previous research found that women's efforts were trivialized in sports commentary (Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988). It should be noted that while all comments mentioned about female athletes' hard work and effort and physical power were included (positive, negative, and neutral), the results do not specify what kind of comments about their athleticism were made.

The fourth hypothesis predicted female play-by-play and color announcers would emphasize importance of team in their commentary at a higher proportion than will male

play-by-play and color announcers. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in proportions between gender and team comments made about female athletes. The results did not support this hypothesis. Although a significant difference was found between the proportions, the proportions were not different in the direction predicted in the hypothesis. Interestingly, male announcers had a higher proportion of team comments than female announcers (see Table 4). Previous research explained that the focus on individuals rather than the team is a denial of team, and found that most references included information about players' backgrounds and families, rarely about team (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). It is likely that male announcers have credited the contributions and efforts made by individual players for their team because their perceptions of women's sports have changed. Possibly their acknowledgement of team contributions is an acceptance of team, rather than a denial, and women's sports is advancing in the minds of announcers. It should be noted that out of 1,066 comments coded, this descriptor accounted for only 26 of those comments. It can be assumed that the small sample size had an effect on the results. The findings from hypotheses 3 and 4 could suggest that women's sports are advancing in the minds of male announcers. It could also be likely that the increase and presence of female announcers has caused the male announcer's perceptions to change. These results are important in understanding what areas of women's athletics are starting to receive acknowledgment and credit.

The fifth hypothesis stated female play-by-play and color announcers would make a higher proportion of references to knowledge, strategy, and mental abilities of the game in their commentary than will male play-by-play and color announcers. A Chi-Square

Test of Independence was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in proportions between gender and mental comments about female athletes. The hypothesis was supported, as the results indicated a significant finding between the proportions, and female announcers had a higher percentage of comments than males (see Table 5). Previous research found that commentary of women's play-by-play commentary presented a denial of game. The commentary consisted only of who had possession of the ball, or who shot or fouled. The women's game was absent of jargon such as "no weakside help", "full court diamond press", or "blocked out", and there was no mention knowledge or mental abilities (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). The results can indicate strategy, knowledge, and mental abilities were recognized by commentators, but as stated before, the results cannot conclude whether the comments were positive, negative, or neutral. The results can only indicate that there is a relationship that exists between the proportions. However, these results could suggest that the quality of women's sports and female athletes has improved in the minds of announcers.

The first hypothesis predicted female play-by-play and color announcers would use a higher proportion of positive attributes describing female athletes than will male play-by-play and color announcers. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in proportions between gender and positive comments made about female athletes. The hypothesis was supported, as the results indicated a significant difference between the proportions, and females were more than 10% more likely to use positive comments than males (see Table 1). These results add to previous research found by Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) that explained that during commentary of marathon running, the female commentator countered stereotypical

remarks made by the male commentator with positive comments. These results may suggest that during games when there was a male play-by-play announcer and a female color announcer, females may have made positive comments to counter negative remarks. Additionally, it could be assumed from the results that the female commentators sympathized with female athletes and felt the need to compliment their efforts rather than trivialize them.

Finally, the second hypothesis stated a lower proportion of female play-by-play and color announcers would physically objectify female athletes than will male play-by-play and color announcers. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in proportions between gender and physical objectification of female athletes. The hypothesis was not supported, and significant differences between the proportions were not found between gender and physical objectification. Additionally, females made more physical comments about female athletes than males (see Table 2). Previous research shows that women's athletics are sexualized in television commentary (Daddario, 1999). One possible cause for these results is that the small sample size did not allow for an adequate amount of data to produce significant findings for this hypothesis. Also, because all comments mentioned about female athletes' appearances were included (positive, negative, and neutral), the results are not able to specify what kind of comments about their appearances were made. It should be noted that (d) looks and appearances was the descriptor least coded in the physical category. Huffman et al. (2004) explained, "One meaning is conveyed by what gets covered, but another equally powerful meaning is conveyed by what does not receive media attention" (p. 477). These results could indicate from the lack of comments made

about female athletes' appearances made by the announcers that physical objectification has decreased in importance to announcers. Further, it could be assumed that announcers have begun to focus on other aspects of the game when announcing women's athletics.

Conclusion of the Findings

These findings further the understanding of gender and commentary. There was significant difference found between gender and positive attributes stated about female athletes. Female announcers made more positive attributes about female athletes than males. Additionally, there was a significant difference found between gender and mental comments of female athletes. Again, female announcers attributed more comments to these descriptors. Huffman et al. (2004) explained the equal power of what does and does not get covered. Female announcers' recognition mental abilities indicate the presence of these attributes in female athletes, as the lack of recognition from males could be a denial of that presence. Moreover, significant differences were found between gender and masculine and athletic and team comments. Commentary did not vary between gender and commenting on female athlete's appearances. Interestingly, males made more comments about team efforts and athletic abilities of female athletes, as not suggested by the hypotheses. Overall, there is a significant relationship that exists between gender and commentary. It can be assumed that increasing the number of female announcers reporting women's sporting events could help change the perception of women's sports and female athletes. Moreover, it may be up to female announcers to help educate others on the importance of equal coverage for women's athletics. It would be beneficial to continue to investigate the differences between male and female announcers.

The framing theory has been applied to this current study to show that there are underlying powerful meanings that effect audience members' perceptions of the messages they see, hear, and read in the media (Jamieson & Waldon, 2003). More knowledge about how the framing theory, as it applies to sports and gender, and its' effects on audience members could aid in training future students interested in sports announcing, and current sports announcers, about the importance of their messages, both said and unsaid.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the current study that should be noted. The first limitation involved the time frame allotted for the collection of data. The researcher recorded the audio of the games alone and the games were only available for a limited time after they were posted on ESPN 3.com. Therefore, the researcher could not record all of the games from the tournament. Second, there was an initial lack of resources to record all of the games. Due to this, the researcher was able to record only a total of 41 games. Of those 41 games, the researcher was only able to record three games for the Male/Male category. Consequently, that category could not be subject to randomization. Third, the researcher's data were used in the analysis. The researcher's interpretation of the descriptors and how they were used by commentators depended on the context and relevance of the phrase. Thus, the researcher's interpretation of these descriptors and phrases may not be generalizable to how others may have interpreted the descriptors and phrases.

Future Research

Overall, the findings of this study showed significant differences in the proportions between gender and positive comments and acknowledgement of strategy, knowledge, and mental power of female athletes. It is recommended that further studies continue to analyze these relationships. Future studies should compare gender to the tone of the comments made (positive, negative, or neutral). There are several recommendations about the research design that could improve the quality of the results. First, future studies should increase the sample size to make the findings more generalizable. Second, the current study recorded games only from the tournament. Recording a whole season could increase the findings' ability to be generalized and increase the chances of producing significant findings. Third, future studies should also increase the number of coders involved in coding the data. It could be helpful to not have the researcher do a portion of the coding, in order to have more objectivity. Lastly, future research should have the same amount of male and female coders to decrease the chance of biases that may occur during the coding process.

Future research should continue to research the relationships mentioned in the hypothesis, but they could take the research in different directions. Future studies could do a comparison of comments made about male basketball players and contrast them with comments made about female players. Also, the current study analyzed only women's NCAA tournament games; future research could conduct a study on the Women's National Basketball Association. Additionally, future studies could analyze other masculine or feminine sports such as soccer, softball, or tennis. Lastly, future studies

should look at other media that could possibly frame women's athletics; such as print (magazines and newspapers).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FOOTNOTES

¹ In their evaluation of the importance of commentators to sports, the researchers presumed the play-by-play announcer to be male.

APPENIDIX B:
CODEBOOK AND MEASUREMENT SCALE
FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Announcer Gender:

Male = 1
Female = 2

Announcer Team:

Male/Male = 1
Female/Female = 2
Male/Female = 3

Negative/Positive/Neutral:

Negative = 1
Neutral = 2
Positive = 3

Announcer Type

Play-by-Play = 1
Color = 2

Game Half

1st half = 1
2nd half = 2
Overtime = 3

Definition of Categories

Example

1. Physical/athleticism	“jumps high” “aggressive” “strength”
2. Intelligence/mental skill	“can read the defense” “smart player”
1. Negative consonance	“not her best game”
2. Neutral	comment is not positively or negatively charged
3. Positive consonance	“she’s having a great game”

Terms for analysis

Physical Categories:

a. Hard work/effort/	“works hard on defense” “ability”
b. Speed	“she is quick on offense” “swift”
c. Physical Power	“muscular” “she’s tough” “strong” “athletic”
d. Looks/appearance	“gotten bigger” “graceful” (anything about looks)

Psychological Categories:

e. Mental power	“thinking without the ball”
f. Determination/motivation	“she doesn’t give up easily” “confidence”
g. Leadership	“leader on and off the court”
h. Team orientation	“picking up slack of the team”
i. Personality	“outgoing” “quiet”
j. Background	previous coaches or games, personal gains or loses
k. Strategy	“no weakside help” “full court press”
l. Knowledge	“blocked out” “trapping in the corner”

Neutral Categories:

m. Versatility	“she plays well in both positions” “talented player”
n. Other	comments that do not belong to a category

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VITA

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Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the differences between female and male play-by-play and color commentators during women's NCAA tournament games. A content analysis was conducted to analyze the commentary between female and male commentators during nine audio recorded Women's NCAA tournament games from ESPN 3.com.

Findings and Conclusions: A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to test five hypotheses that stated proportions of comments would vary by gender and descriptor. Hypotheses 1 and 5 were supported; as results revealed that female announcers made more positive comments and comments about female athlete's strategy, knowledge, and mental abilities than male commentators. Results for Hypotheses 3 and 4 were opposite of what had been predicted; males were found to have made higher proportions of masculine and athletic comments and team comments about female athletes. No differences were found between gender and the proportion of comments made about female athlete's looks and appearances. Overall, these results suggest there is a significant relationship that exists between gender and commentary. Further research investigating the differences of these relationships is recommended.

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